

## § 636.1

## 20 CFR Ch. V (4–1–97 Edition)

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AUTHORITY: 29 U.S.C. 1579(a).

SOURCE: 48 FR 48780, Oct. 20, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

### § 636.1 Scope and purpose.

(a) *General.* This part establishes the procedures to receive, investigate and resolve complaints, and conduct hearings to adjudicate disputes under title IV (except part B) of the Act. It governs grievance procedures at the recipient or subrecipient level, the receipt and investigation of complaints at the Federal level, the procedures for resolving investigative findings, the rules of practice for adjudicative hearings, and the rendering of decisions pursuant to the Act. Judicial review of final action of the Department after opportunity for an administrative hearing has been exclusively established in the United States Courts of Appeals for the Circuits in which the affected parties reside or transact business.

(b) *Initiation of investigations.* JTPA investigations may be initiated upon the request of any person or organization or by the Department on its own initiative.

(c) *Non-JTPA remedies.* Whenever any person, organization or agency believes that a recipient or subrecipient has engaged in conduct that violates the Act and that such conduct also violates a Federal statute other than JTPA, or a State or local law, that person, organization or agency may, with respect to the non-JTPA cause of action, institute a civil action or pursue other remedies authorized under other Federal, State, or local law against the recipient or subrecipient without first exhausting the remedies in this subpart. For example, if a subrecipient believes that a grantee has breached the

subgrant agreement between the grantee and itself, the subrecipient may institute a civil action for breach of contract in a State court if so authorized by State law. Nothing in the Act or this paragraph, shall:

(1) Allow any person or organization to join or sue the Secretary with respect to his or her responsibilities under JTPA except after exhausting the remedies in this subpart.

(2) Allow any person or organization to file a suit which alleges a violation of JTPA or these regulations without first exhausting the administrative remedies described in this subpart, or

(3) Be construed to create a private right of action with respect to alleged violations of JTPA or the regulations.

(d) Complaints of discrimination pursuant to section 167(a) of the Act will be handled under 29 CFR parts 31 and 32.

[48 FR 48780, Oct. 20, 1983, as amended at 55 FR 13007, Apr. 6, 1990]

### § 636.2 Protection of informants.

(a) *Informants.* Where possible the identity of any person who has furnished information relating to, or assisted in an investigation of a possible violation of the Act will be held in confidence. Where disclosure of the person's identity is essential to assure a fair determination of the issues, or where necessary to effectively accomplish responsibilities under the Act, the Department may disclose such identity upon such conditions as will promote the continued receipt of confidential information by the Department and effectuate the protections and policies stated in paragraph (b) of this section. Any such disclosure shall be consistent with the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act and other applicable law.

(b) *Retaliation prohibited.* No person or agency may discharge, or in any other manner discriminate or retaliate against any person, or deny to any person a benefit to which that person is entitled under the provisions of the Act or the regulations because such person has filed any complaint, instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to the Act, has testified or is about to testify in any such

proceeding or investigation, or has provided information or assisted in an investigation.

**§ 636.3 Complaint and hearing procedures at the grantee level.**

(a) *Policy.* (1) Each grantee shall establish and maintain a procedure for resolving any complaint alleging a violation of the Act, regulations, grant or other agreements under the Act, including any complaint arising in connection with the JTPA programs operated by the grantee or its subrecipients. Such complaint procedures must meet the requirements of this section. The complaint procedure shall provide for final resolution of complaints within 60 days after filing the complaint. Where existing complaints or grievance procedures include the elements set forth in this section, grantees may adopt such mechanism as, or as part of, their JTPA procedure.

(2) Participants shall be provided, upon enrollment into employment or training, with a written description of the complaint procedures including notification of their right to file a complaint and instructions on how to do so. Grantees should designate an individual to monitor the operation of the complaint procedures, to ensure that complaints and related correspondence are logged and filed, to ensure that assistance is available for properly filling complaints, and to ensure the availability, coordination, and promptness of all elements of the procedures. Upon filing a complaint, and at each stage thereafter, each complaint shall be notified in writing of the next step in the procedure.

(3) Complaints may be brought by any individual or organization including, but not limited to, program participants, subrecipients, contractors, staff of the grantee or subrecipient, applicants for participation or financial assistance, labor unions, and community-based organizations.

(4) With the exception of complaints alleging fraud or criminal activity, the filing of a complaint pursuant to this section must be made within one year of the alleged occurrence.

(5) The grantee may delegate the authority to operate and maintain the complaint and hearing procedure to its

subrecipients except for complaints between the grantee and its subrecipients (e.g., audit disallowances), complaints involving more than one of its subrecipients, or complaints directly involving the operations or responsibilities of the grantee. Where the procedure is delegated, the grantee may provide for an appeal to itself from the decision of the subrecipient or the grantee may provide that the subrecipient's decision is the final decision of the grantee. Where the procedure is delegated, the grantee shall ensure that the procedures specified in this section are followed and a decision issued promptly within 60 days after a complaint is filed.

(6) When a participant is an employee of a grantee or subrecipient and alleges that an occurrence constitutes a violation of the Act, regulations, grant, or other agreements under the Act, as well as a violation of the terms and conditions of employment under a State or local law or a collective bargaining agreement, the participant may pursue the complaint and hearing procedures under the State or local law or the collective bargaining agreement, pursuant to § 636.4. A participant who selects the procedures provided in this section is not precluded from filing a complaint under § 636.4, unless otherwise prohibited by State or local law, or applicable collective bargaining agreement.

(b) *Complaint procedures.* The complaint resolution procedure shall include:

(1) Opportunity to file a complaint. All complaints shall be in writing.

(2) Opportunity for informal resolution of the complaint.

(3) Written notification of an opportunity for a hearing when an informal resolution has not been accomplished. The notice shall state the procedures for requesting a hearing and shall describe the elements in the hearing procedures including those set forth in paragraph (c) of this section.

(4) Opportunity to amend the complaint prior to a hearing.

(5) Opportunity for a hearing pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section within 30 days of filing the complaint.